Consulting with Communities in Nunavut

A Guide to Community Consultation for the Mineral Exploration and Mining Sector

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Pivalliayuliqiyikkut Ingilrayuliqiyitkullu
Department of Economic Development & Transportation
Ministère du Développement économique et des Transports

The Government of Nunavut wants to ensure that meaningful benefits from resource development flow to Nunavummiut. *Parnautit, the Nunavut Mineral Exploration and Mining Strategy,* has committed the Government of Nunavut to develop guidelines to improve communication between communities, governments, and industry. By building strong relationships and effective communication among stakeholders, resource development can bring benefits to the people of Nunavut.

If you are reading this pamphlet it's likely that you are in the mining industry and are thinking about doing business in Nunavut. This pamphlet will give you some insightful, practical advice on consulting in the territory. Read it over; keep it handy. As your plans develop, read our complete ***Guide to Community Consultation for the Mineral Exploration and Mining Sector***. The guide is not intended to add to your regulatory obligations; rather it's a voluntary manual providing information on regulatory agencies, community structures and consultation best practices in Nunavut.

GOOD TO KNOW

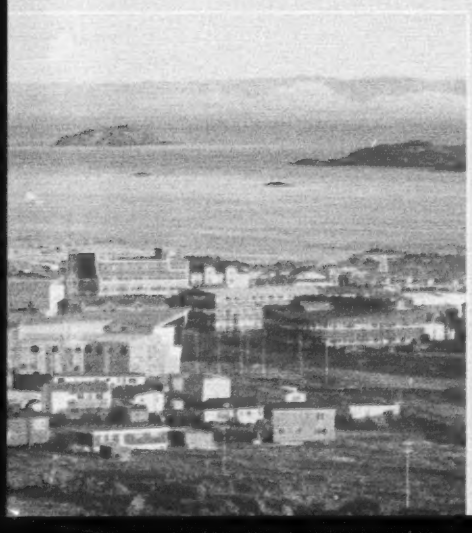
Getting it right, from the start, builds a strong foundation for the duration of the project.

These practical suggestions are based on extensive input from community organizations and reflect their expectations and goals for participating in consultation activities.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT NUNAVUT?

Culture

Nunavut's culture is rooted in Inuit and northern experience. Some residents have little familiarity with mining. An orientation to the industry may be useful for some groups. It's also important to be aware that many community members are unilingual Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun speakers. That means translated materials and interpreters are essential for effective communication.



Regulatory

Nunavut has a single, settled land claim. The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) guides the institutional and regulatory landscape you will be operating in. Get to know it.

Getting around

Travel in Nunavut is expensive. Make sure your budget can adequately cover the costs, including weather delays. You don't want unanticipated expenses to derail your plans.

Local assistance

One of the best things you can do when starting off is to find a local facilitator in a community who can act as a liaison between your company and the community. They may be able to help in any or all of these ways:

- identify key people you need to meet;
- suggest different ways to meet with community members;
- set up logistics;
- offer insight into concerns that community members may have about your project.

GOOD TO KNOW

The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement requires mining companies to conduct consultations. But remember, engaging communities is also a good way to build an ongoing relationship with people in our territory.

Competing consultations

Nunavut's communities are small and it is likely that you're not the only game in town. You may be vying for the time and attention of the community with others on your project or other proposed projects. Find out what else is going on in the community and plan accordingly.

WHO'S WHO IN NUNAVUT COMMUNITIES?

One of the first things you'll notice is that Nunavut has several organizations unique to the territory. There is, of course, the Government of Nunavut and its departmental representatives in the communities, as well as the municipal governments. There are also Regional Inuit Associations (RIA) and Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTO). Get to know who's who and what they do. These organizations may help you make your first connection in a community.

Local government services

This may include a wide range of service providers in the community:

- health centre staff
- schools
- RCMP
- local housing association
- conservation officers
- income support workers
- community economic development workers
- government liaison officers

Municipal government

Municipal government in Nunavut communities has the same responsibilities as elsewhere in that it provides essential services, such as water delivery, sewage removal, recreation and social services. This level of government consists of the Mayor, Council members, Senior Administrative Officers, Economic Development Officers, and various committees.

Regional Inuit Associations

There are three Regional Inuit Associations (RIA) in Nunavut – Kitikmeot, Kivalliq and Qikiqtani. Each one represents the interest of Inuit in terms of the land claim agreement. Knowing which RIA is the appropriate one to engage should be straightforward as their jurisdiction corresponds to geographic areas. Within each RIA are people who might be able to assist you:

- Lands, Resources, and/or Environment Department
- Community Liaison Officers
- Community Lands and Resources Committees and/or Community Beneficiary Committees

Hunters and Trappers Organizations

These organizations represent hunters' interests and carry out specific wildlife management functions.

Private business

These include the Northern Store and/or local Co-op Store, local expeditors, or other local retailers and service providers.

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Work with Nunavut communities as early on in the process as possible. Setting goals with community partners will increase the chance of success. In addition, making consultation goals clear and measurable will give the consultation process momentum and reduce the risk of "consultation fatigue."

Setting goals

Identify exactly what you will do and how your consultations will be monitored to create a focused and efficient program.

GOOD TO KNOW

A consultation program needs to have a clear focus to be more than a casual relationship that goes nowhere.

Set goals by asking:

- What do you want your relationship with communities to look like?
- What can you learn from the community that will help you make decisions related to your project?
- What do different community groups need to know about your activities?
- How will you know when your consultation program achieves success?

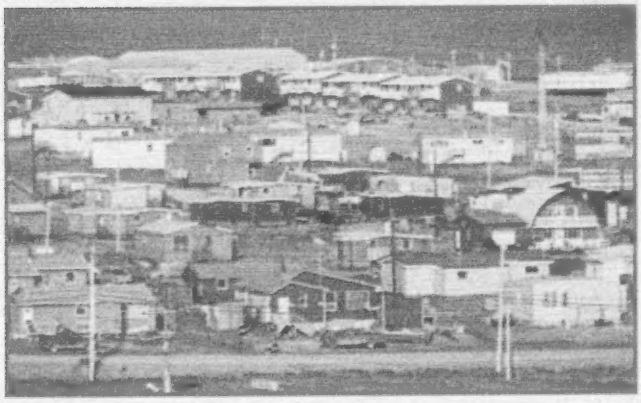
Once you've answered these questions, the next step is to work with community partners in setting and validating your goals.

- Find out what community partners expect from your consultation activities.
- Find out what expectations the RIA and the Nunavut Impact Review Board have for your consultation activities.
- Once you have agreed-upon goals, write them down. Make them clear, measurable and relevant to your project's needs.

Consultation activities must include some form of follow-up with communities. This could be a return visit to update a community on the project and/or most recent field season, or it could be reporting back to the community to show how the information you received from them was used in your decision-making.

PLANNING A VISIT

You can use a number of methods, in combination, to reach people in Nunavut communities. First, know who your target audience is and understand why you are consulting with them in order to determine the best approaches to use.



Here are some options:

- local radio and cable TV for general public information;
- local radio call-in shows to hear from some callers and answer questions;
- show and tell booths – manned information booths to generate awareness of your project;
- kitchen table visits – meet with individuals or families in a casual setting;
- meetings with specific organizations or committees to offer detailed information and discuss key issues;
- issue-focused workshops – opportunity to provide detailed information and discuss key issues in an informal setting;
- site visits – provide people with a concrete experience of the project;
- "on the land" field trips – helps to equalize the power balance between you and the local knowledge holders; and,
- public meetings – share insight and observations with a diversity of groups and people.

Other things to think about when planning a visit:

- Providing refreshments for your meeting is often a good idea. Taking a "snack break" creates an opportunity for more casual conversation and a chance to build relationships.
- Compensation for participating in consultation can be tricky. It's best to raise the question early in your planning and ask local representatives about standard practices in their communities.
- Don't take community participation for granted. People have active lives and have taken the time to meet with you. Respect their time by planning in advance, providing relevant information, and answering their questions.
- Be assured that events will not always unfold as planned. Poor weather is almost certain at some point to derail your plans. Good weather may send everyone out onto the land to hunt. A crisis in a community will mean a cancelled meeting. These events are out of your control – try to relax. Your ability to be understanding is an important sign of your desire to build a real relationship with community members.

GOOD TO KNOW

Ask your local contact/ facilitator for a good time to visit their communities. You need to consider when people are out on the land, when other consultations may be going on and when community events, such as celebrations, funerals, and bingo nights may be underway.

COMMUNICATING

Now that you're in the community you will want to make the most of this opportunity by communicating effectively. Remember, good communication includes listening as well as speaking.

Some key ideas to keep in mind:

- include in your presentation information that your audience needs and wants to know;
- be clear about what your consultation is for. You are providing information to the public, and receiving information from them. You are not involving them in your decision-making;
- communicate clearly, avoid industry and/or technical jargon but maintain credibility through appropriately detailed information;
- send English and translated material to the community before you arrive;
- many Elders do not speak English, yet have a lot to offer. Before you arrive in a community, set up interpreters to help out at your meetings;
- avoid asking the community for feedback, and then take up all the time promoting your project;
- keep your message consistent from one group and/or community to the next;
- be open to different ways of seeing things. Respect how those differences lead to views you may not immediately understand;
- don't promise anything that is beyond your ability to deliver;
- catch yourself if you start labeling people or their positions instead of listening to what they are trying to express.

GOOD TO KNOW

Recognize that communities do not speak with one voice – different groups will have different perspectives on your project. Account for this diversity and be open to hearing all sides.

TROUBLESHOOTING

At some point in your community consultation process, difficult issues are likely to arise.

Be prepared to deal with:

- the potential for adverse impacts of mining;
- environmental or workplace accidents;
- perception of broken promises;
- diversity of opinion; and
- consultation fatigue.

What you can do:

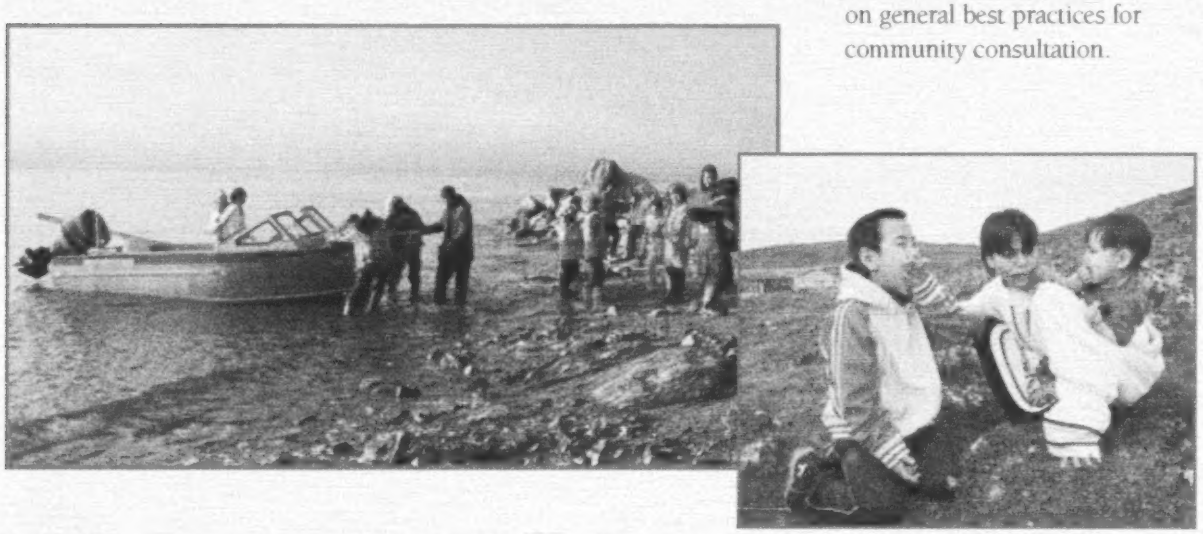
- continue listening, keep asking questions to clarify concerns;
- determine where there is mutual understanding and work from there – consensus around an issue may lead to productive discussions on how to address the issue;
- appreciate the differences in world views and life experiences;
- be proactive on reporting back to the community, even on negative issues; and
- consider calling in a neutral third party.

Dealing with difficult issues is easier if you accept in advance that they will occur. Keep in mind that your success in dealing with them will be influenced by the quality of the foundation you have built early in the relationship-building process.

This pamphlet highlights aspects of how to consult with communities in Nunavut. Reading over the complete *Guide to Community Consultation for the Mineral Exploration and Mining Sector* will give you more detail about these unique aspects, but also more information on general best practices for community consultation.

GOOD TO KNOW

Consultation isn't just to promote the benefits of your project. Be realistic and be prepared to answer tough questions.



From *words* to WORK

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